THE LIGHTER SIDE OF THE POWER GAME

Mohammad Asghar Khan



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JANG PUBLISHERS

FIRST EDITION : JULY 1985.

PRINTED BY : JANG PRINTING PRESS, LAHORE

PRICE : Rs. 50.00

JANG PUBLISHERS
13, SIR AGHA KHAN ROAD, LAHORE.

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PREFACE

Politics is a hard life. It is a demanding and a consuming pastime. It is occasionally rewarding but often frustrating. But for all its disadvantages and pitfalls, it is fascinating even for those on the fringe. For those in midstream, its fascination is tempered with an involvement which becomes deeper with the passage of time, until a stage is reached when it outgrows the fascination. Politics then becomes so important a part of life that all else is subordinated to its requirements. When politics is based on some deep conviction or purpose, it is rendered more meaningful and satisfying. In writings, whether in books, journals or newspapers one is made aware of the more serious aspects of political life, but it is seldom that its lighter side is brought in the public view. When politics are the politics of power, many opportunities arise which provide people near those in authority, amusement in an otherwise dull existence.

In this book, I have written about some experiences which provided me considerable amusement at the time and may, I feel, be of interest and amusement to the reader. I hope that these pages will also provide a little insight into the lighter side of the power game—a game which appears at times to be played with deadly seriousness. The book may also provide a lesson for those aspiring to positions of authority and may possible help them, when they reach those positions, to see things as they appear to others.

Mohammad Asghar Khan

JUVENILE DIPLOMACY

A country's ambassadors perform an important role and even in this world of highly developed communications and jet diplomacy they remain an important link in projecting a country's image and safeguarding its interests. However, in most newly independent autocratic countries, the selection of its ambassadors has often been based on personal rather than national considerations, resulting in damage to the country's interests and lowering of its prestige abroad. This has a humorous side which displays itself periodically to the embarrassment of the country and at some cost to its interests. An incident will illustrate the extent to which these interests can be damaged by people unsuited for these jobs.

On a visit abroad for a South East Asia Treaty Organisation meeting, I was among those invited to a luncheon given by our Ambassador in honour of Dean Rusk, the United States Secretary of State. There were about a dozen other guests including the United States Assistant Secretary of State for South and South East Asia. The U S Secretary of State was appropriately seated next to the ambassador

and the U S Assistant Secretary and I were on the opposite side. There were a few other Pakistani guests present. Throughout the lunch, the ambassador kept on making uncalled for rude remarks in Urdu about Dean Rusk, which were obviously meant to amuse his Pakistani guests. This he continued to do whenever Dean Rusk was engaged in conversation with some one else at the table.

The luncheon over, the guests were served with coffee and after some time, Dean Rusk and his party were ready to depart. Just then the U S Assistant Secretary of State turned to the ambassador and the other guests standing near him and said, "Gentlemen, before I leave, I should like to tell you a story. During the war, many Americans served in India and when the war ended they were demobilized and returned home to the United States. One Sunday morning, two GIs, who had served in India and had acquired a working knowledge of Hindustani, were walking in a street in a remote town in the United States, looking at shop windows, when a third American passed them. This third American happened to have a very long nose. One of the GIs, wishing to comment on this man's long nose, said to the second GI, *Dekho is ka naak kitna lamba hai* (look what a long nose he has). Would you believe it" the U S Asssistant Secretary said" what this third American on hearing this remark replied, *itna he ho sakta hai jitna khuda nay banaya ho. Is men mera kiya kasoor hai* (It can only be as long as God has made it. It is no fault of mine) . The moral of the story" said the U S Assistant Secretary "is that you find people in the oddest places who speak your language. Thank you, Mr. Ambassador, for a very nice lunch"

The ambassador nearly collapsed and cut a very sorry figure. We learnt later that the U S Assistant Secretary had spent some years in Aligarh University in India and had been the U S ambassador to Afghanistan. He was a Persian scholar and spoke fluent Urdu. Dean Rusk, too, had served in India during the war and probably had a working knowledge of the language.

RAM SINGH

On one occasion when I visited Thailand, I found our ambassador there very despondent. On my enquiring the cause of his depressed mental state he said that something terrible had happened which had upset him greatly. The story that I was told was true to character and very interesting. The King and Queen of Thailand had visited Pakistan a short while earlier and the visit had received a great deal of publicity in the country. For some weeks, the ambassador said, newspapers and the media were full of Pakistan, which was projected as a country of great warriors. Military guards of honour, the President's body guard, wild looking tribesmen, ferocious looking tribal Maliks and tribal sword dances had painted the image of a nation whose friendship rather than\ enmity should be in everybody's interests. The King and Queen had been very appreciative of the royal treatment that they had received and this had impressed the Thais who held royalty in high esteem.

The ambassador said that a month or so after the King's return from Pakistan, he was approached by a well-known Sikh wrestler, Ram Singh, from Singapore who

said that he belonged to Montgomery in Pakistan and was a Pakistani who had settled in Singapore. He said that he would like the Pakistan ambassador to sponsor his wrestling bout with the champion Thai wrestler. The ambassador thought that this was another opportunity to project Pakistan. He felt that the martial qualities of the Pakistanis, which had been already well projected, would be demonstrated before the Thai people in the form of their popular sport. His enquiries revealed that Ram Singh was a wrestler of high quality and he thought that apart from Ram Singh's wrestling, his beard and bulk would impress the Thai people. They did not know the difference between a Sikh and a Pathan nor were they aware that there were no Sikhs in Montgomery since 1947. Ram Singh appeared a safe bet and the ambassador proceeded to make the necessary arrangements. Following so closely in the wake of the King's visit, the bout received wide publicity and there was great excitement in Bangkok. It was said that this would be a great contest to watch and the King and Queen agreed to be the chief guests. The diplomatic corp was present in strength and the stadium was packed with expectant crowds on the day of the bout. The Pakistan ambassador played the host and before the contest started, Ram Singh was introduced as the "great westler" from Pakistan, the land of the mighty warriors.

The bout did not last for more than a minute or two. Barely had the contest started when Ram Singh was knocked flat on his back and the Thai wrestler declared the winner. It appeared incredible that the great wrestler from Pakistan should have proved so weak as to be knocked out in so short a time. People had paid a lot of money to witness the fight,

and since the King and Queen had specially graced the occasion, it was decided to give Ram Singh and Pakistan another chance. In the second encounter, just as the Thai wrestler came to grips with Ram Singh and after one or two manoeuvres, he was flat on his back again, the bout was declared over and the impression this contest created was that Pakistan was not the land of such mighty warriors as they had been led to believe. This, the ambassador said, was a great blow to Pakistan and he was convinced that it was the result of a conspiracy hatched by the Indian ambassador in Bangkok who had been upset by the very favourable publicity that Pakistan had received following the royal visit. He said that the Indian ambassador had got Ram Singh over from Singapore, tutored him to pose as a Pakistani and that he had foolishly fallen into the trap. Ram Singh, he said, had not even put up a fight.

A MAJOR'S COUP

In the mid 50's, soon after Pakistan joined the South East Asia Treaty Organisation, it was required to host a meeting of the SEATO Council at which each country was to be represented by its Foreign Minister. The meeting was to be held in the National Assembly Hall in Karachi and the Foreign Minister of the host country, Pakistan, Hamidul Haq Chowdhry, was to preside over the meeting. Syed Amjad Ali, the Federal Finance Minister, was to lead the Pakistan delegation. He was to be assisted by representatives of the Foreign Office and the three Defence Services. One of the problems facing Pakistan, at the time, as it has been for most of its existence, was Afghanistan, and army's General Headquarters was anxious that the military threat from Afghanistan should be placed in an effective manner before the meeting of SEATO foreign ministers. Military aid from the United States was in the offing, and it was felt that a powerful exposition of the case would influence the U S decision in this matter. The U S was to be represented by the late John Foster Dulles, its Secretary of State.

Prior to the meeting, the Pakistan delegation got together to discuss the agenda and the line that was to be

adopted on various issues before the conference. The GHQ representative, a General, known for the forceful advocacy of his view and a Napoleonic air, spelt out the military threat from the North West in great detail. He was not satisfied that Amjad Ali could represent these views adequately and suggested that when the military threat came under discussion, the leader of the Pakistan delegation should ask him to speak and explain the problem. Amjad Ali did not think that this was either necessary or desirable and explained that he would be able to handle the problem and explain the threat posed to Pakistan from the North Western direction. He said that he had the Ministry of Defence's brief and could read it out if necessary. The General was most unhappy with the Minister's insistence that he would do all the talking but his exhortations were of no avail. Pakistan still had a civilian government and although the military had begun to throw its weight around, it was not as yet able to call the tune.

A short while before the meeting, the General tried once again to persuade the Minister to be more accommodating, but Amjad Ali was adamant. He felt that if he was not to speak on the military threat to Pakistan, what else was he to do in a meeting of the SEATO Council concerned primarily with the security of its Asian member nations? The General made no further effort to persuade the Minister, and the Council session started in a normal manner. The Foreign Ministers commenced their speeches on the situation in the area and the proceedings were fairly routine until it was Pakistan's turn to address the council. Hamidul Haq Chowdhry, seated on a high dais which was used by the speaker of the National Assembly, asked the leader of the Pakistan delegation to address the council. After speaking extempore for a few minutes on the broader problems of the

area, Amjad Ali said that he would "now like to deal with the military threat posed to Pakistan from the North West". He had hardly uttered these words, when a ferocious looking army paratroop Major leapt forward from behind Hamidul Haq Chowdhry's chair on the dais. Unfolding a large map in front of the Pakistan Foreign Minister and hiding him from view, he clicked his heels and addressing the SEATO Council said "Gentlemen, I will now brief you on the military threat from Afghanistan". "What is all this?" asked Amjad Ali in a whisper to the General seated close to him. "How should I know?" was the reply. "I am as surprised as you. Let us see what he has to say". The Major had in the meantime started at high speed with a torrent of military jargon and terminology. He had begun explaining the terrain, climate, height of the mountains, flow of the rivers, nature of the passes, communications and the size of the forces on both sides of the border. His manner was so forceful and he appeared so determined that there was nothing that could be done except to let him have his say. His voice would have drowned anything that Hamidul Haq Chowdhry or Amjad Ali would have had to say, and in any case Pakistan's Foreign Minister was hidden from every body's view. The SEATO Foreign Ministers looked at each other in amazement and at the leader of the Pakistan delegation as if to say, "what is going on?" Amjad Ali had one more try at repairing the situation and asked the General to "stop him"."How can I "the General replied. "I did'nt start it." Amjad Ali slid back in his chair and from then on until the Major had said all he had wanted to, which must have taken ten to fifteen long minutes, kept staring vacantly at the ceiling.

The SEATO Foreign Ministers must have wondered whether this unusual interruption was a forewarning of the ascendancy of the army in Pakistani politics. If they did,

they were not far wrong, for some two and a half years later, the army staged a more meaninqful coup and a General took over the affairs of the country.

SOME HOME TRUTHS

International conferences provide an opportunity to listen to high sounding pharaseology and cliches about human dignity, freedom and rights of nations and individuals that have little relationship to reality. These cliches and jargon are repeated with such regularity and apparant conviction that the speakers begin to believe in the truth of their utterances and the correctness of their country's position in these matters. There is, however, occasionally a breath of fresh air blown across such momentous events. One such occasion was a SEATO meeting at which the Foreign Ministers of the eight member nations were to address a full session of the council. Speaking in alphabetical order, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Walter Nash, an octogenarian, was asked to speak after the foreign ministers of Australia, France and Great Britain had addressed the Council. He said that this was his first SEATO meeting and he had listened with great interest to the views expressed by the foreign ministers who had spoken before him. They had, he said, emphasized that SEATO was an alliance for the preservation of the freedom of its Asian partners, Phillipines, Thailand and Pakistan. He said that these were indeed laudable objectives but "whose free-

dom" he said "are we trying to protect? One of these countries has been ruled by a Field Marshal for some years and civil and human rights, as we know them, have been suspended there. In another, a military coup has taken place recently and a civilian government has been overthrown, and in the third country, a general has taken over the government, abrogated the constitution, declared martial law and suppressed all civil rights. "Gentlemen", he asked, "Is this the freedom that we are trying to defend?" He was of course referring to military qovernments in all the member Asian countries—Phillipines, Thailand and Pakistan.

These remarks of Walter Nash, uttered in all sincerity, were not the usual smooth talk that the SEATO Council was accustomed to and caused quite a stir. Pakistan was the next to address the council in alphabetical order and Manzoor Qadir, its Foreign Minister, on prompting from his advisers, asked for a short break before he spoke. This was agreed and the Pakistan delegation got together to deliberate on the remarks of the New Zealand Prime Minister. The Foreign office representative suggested that he should protest in strong terms at the New Zealand Prime Minister's "uncalled for" remarks. An interesting discussion ensued and having heard every ones point of view, Manzur Qadir, with his characteristic honesty, said that he could not get himself to make any protest at what the New Zealand Prime Minister had said because what he had said was true. The Pakistan Foreign Minister in his address, therefore, did not refer to the New Zealand Prime Minister's references to the three Asian members of SEATO.

A MAORI CUSTOM

In another SEATO Council meeting when the New Zealand Prime Minister was the host in Auckland, in an after dinner speech at which the diplomatic corp was present, he began to introduce the Foreiqn Ministers of each of the seven member countries to his quests. He found suitable words for each one of them but when Pakistan's turn came, he was for a moment at a loss what to say. He asked the "honourable Foreign Minister of Pakistan to please stand up" and as Manzur Qadir, a shy and unassuming man, stood up, there was a pause. Walter Nash looked around and then said, "Mr. Manzur Qadir is the Foreigh Minister of Pakistan, that great country, which many many centuries ago conquered India and civilized it". That was all he had to say about Pakistan's Foreigh Minister but it was quite a mouthful. The Indian High Commissioner, seated nearby, got up and left the table in protest. Walter Nash continued his speech as the Indian High Commissioner strode out of the hall and realising that his remarks had hurt his feelings, he said that he had not meant to hurt the feelings of his honoured guest for whose country he had great affection and which was a member of the Commonwealth. He said that he was only quoting from history.

The dinner over, the guests were entertained to a stage show which concluded with a Maori dance, at the end of which the Prime Minister stood up and said that it was an old Maori custom that one of the guests should rub noses with the prettiest girl on the stage. Looking around at his guests and probably mindful of the incident that had occurred a short while earlier, he asked Manzur Qadir to perform this pleasant duty. Manzur Qadir, normally shy and retiring, appeared excited and leaving the table walked towards the stage. As he got on to the stage, he looked around to select a girl from over a dozen or so there, and having selected the prettiest amongst them, strode forward to perform the old Maori custom. Just when he stood in front of the girl, he noticed a crowd of cameramen ready to click their cameras as he made contact. The thought of the photograph of the Pakistan Foreign Minister rubbing noses with a lightly attired girl, in a grass skirt, adorning the pages of Pakistani newspapers, must suddenly have flashed across his mind. He froze where he stood and turning towards the host said, "I am grateful, Mr. Prime Minister, for the great honour you have done me but the Air Marshal will rub noses for me."

ALL ABOUT A PICTURE

A short while before the 1958 coup, that brought General Ayub Khan to power, Mohamad Ayub Khuro was the Defence Minister in Feroz Khan Noon's cabinet. On assuming these responsibilities, he decided to visit Air Headquarters. It was his first visit to the Air Force and it was decided to provide him a guard of honour and then brief him on the role and the performance of the Pakistan Air Force. The Defence Minister arrived at Air Headquarters at the appointed time and brought a child with him, presumably his son. The child stayed in the car and Khuro, after being received, was invited to inspect the guard of honour. He appeared to enjoy walking to the music of a military band and it was evident that this was his first such experience. After walking a few steps, he suddenly stopped and looked back at the child in the car. The child was watching the ceremony eagerly and Khuro, probably wanting him to share the glory, decided that he should join him in the inspection of the guard. With the child by his side, he completed the rest of the inspection and then came to my office to be briefed on the Pakistan Air Force.

After some introductory remarks, I began to brief

him on what the PAF was required to do, its capabilities and limitations. I had hardly spoken for a few minutes when I noticed that the Defence Minister was not paying any attention to what I had to say and was instead looking at photographs on the wall. These photographas were of the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Liaqat Ali Khan, the country's first Prime Minister and Minister of Defence and the Defence Minister at that time, Mohammad Ayub Khuro. So intrigued was he with these photographs and so oblivious of my speech that I wound up what I had to say and asked him whether he had any questions that he would like to ask. "Yes", was the prompt reply." Why have you got my picture on the wall?" I replied that it had been the custom in the Air Force, ever since it was formed in 1947, that pictures of the founder of the state, Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the first Prime Minister of Pakistan and of the Minister of Defence, whoever he happened to be at the time, should hang on this wall of the Commander-in-Chief's office. "Since you are the Defence Minister, your photograph has been hung up at the place meant for this purpose," I explained." That is very good", he replied." But where are the pictures of my predecessors in this office?" "I cannot tell you, "I replied." These are taken down when they leave and are replaced by a photograph supplied by the Ministry of Defence of the new incumbent. Regretfully," I said, "we have had to change these photographs very often" Khuro did not find this explanation satisfactory and wanted to know where these discarded photographs were kept. I replied that I really did not know. They could be in some cupboard somewhere. "That means that my photograph will also be removed when I go" he said. "Yes" I replied "and the next Defence Ministers photograph will be put up in its place".

Khuro was known as the strong man of Pakistani politics and, mustering all his authority, he told me that he did not like this procedure. "Will you get the photographs of all the previous Defence Ministers and hang them up alongside mine in this office." I explained that I could not break a tradition so well established and regretted that I could not do this. He was insistent that this be done and would not take NO for an answer. I was equally adamant and regretted that I could not comply with these instructions. I was quite willing to remove his picture, which would have solved the controversy, but seeing him in such a rage, I did not suggest such a remedy. After spending quite a long time on this trivial matter and without adding to his knowledge of the air force, he left air headquarters, obviously displeased with what he had seen.

This was my first formal encounter with a politician but I got to know Khuro after his retirement from politics and began to like him. I understand that during his brief tenure as Minister of Defence, he had quite a few encounters with the Commander-in-Chief of the army, General Ayub Khan, until the coup that removed Feroz Khan Noon's government and him from office.

THE EMBARRASSED HOST

In the early 60's, whilst piloting my B-57 bomber aircraft on a flight from the Phillipines to Japan, I landed at the United States Air Force Base at Kadena in Okinawa where I had planned a night stop. The U.S. Air Force authorities had been informed of my arrival, and when I landed there at about midday, I was given a red carpet reception. I was the Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistan Air Force and Pakistan had only recently entered into the SEATO Defence Pact with the United States. The U.S. air force, therefore, went out of its way to make me feel that they were pleased to have me stay with them even though for a short time. The Air Force General commanding the U.S. Air Force at Kadena who received me on arrival had taken a lot of trouble to make my stay interesting and enjoyable. I was shown around the base and entertained to an evening party and dinner. Much to my regret, however, my busy schedule did not cater for a game of golf on the attractive golf course on the base. Since my stay had been very carefully planned, I did not think it proper to ask for a change in the programme.

Early the next morning, when I was having my breakfast, I was told by the U.S. Air Force Escort Officer that my aircraft had been moved to the maintenance area for the night and would be brought to the VIP point, from where I would be given a ceremonial send-off by the Commanding General. I explained that since I must personally check the aircraft before departure, it would have been better if it had been left in the maintenance area. The Escort Officer, however, explained that the General was very particular that the departure should be from the VIP point and that all the checking would have been done by the maintenance staff well before the time of my departure. Not very happy with the General's insistence on protocol, I wondered how I would combine the pilot's pre-flight checks with the requirements of a ceremonial departure. We drove out at the appointed time to the VIP point and as we neared the place of departure, I was astonished to see my B-57 aircraft standing on its nose in a ditch a few hundred yards from the place of ceremonial departure. My Escort Officer was as perplexed as I and as we reached the scene of this accident I was met by the General, who explained that the tow-hook of the vehicle pulling the aircraft to its departure point had given way as the aircraft was being moved. The person occupying the cockpit, not being conversant with the brake system of the aircraft, had not been able to control it. The aircraft therefore, because of a slight slope in the taxi way, had rolled into the ditch a few minutes before my arrival. The General said that he was so embarassed that he could "shoot himself". I asked him not to do this as this act of his would embarrass me too.

The technical staff carried out a quick survey of the damage which fortunately was of a relatively minor nature and estimated that the aircraft could be made serviceable in two or three days to fly on to the U.S. Air Force base at

Yokata in Japan where further repairs would be necessary Making the aircraft airworthy was not the General's only problem. In addition to the aircraft, he had me on his hands and wondered what to do with his guest, for whom he had prepared a very busy schedule on the previous day. The General explained his predicament and said that he would have to obtain instructions from Washington about my programme for the next two or three days. Seeing this as an opportunity to relax and play some golf, I asked him to please leave me alone and explained that whilst I was very appreciative of his concern for me, I would much prefer that no formal programme was arranged. Much to the embarrassed General's satisfaction and to mine, I was left alone to enjoy playing golf whilst my plane was being repaired. When the aircraft had been made serviceable, I decided to leave the following morning and requested the General to allow the aircraft to depart from the maintenance area without any ceremony and without bringing it to the VIP departure point. He was adamant that I must leave from the place meant for this purpose and would not agree to my leaving from the maintenance area. It appeared that the prestige of the United States Air Force was at stake, so I reluctantly gave in. My departure was uneventful and I left for Yokota with interesting memories of my stay in Okinawa.

A TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

President Ayub Khan once told me of an interesting experience he had with the Governor General, Ghulam Mohammad. It was in the mid 50's when he was Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistan Army. The Governor General had suffered a stroke which had affected his power of speech. Ghulam Mohammad had gone to London from where he telephoned Ayub Khan at Rawalpindi. These were the days when the army had not as yet openly entered into politics, but Ayub Khan was playing a behind-the-scenes role in supporting Ghulam Mohammad's extra-constitutional moves. The Governor General had sounded very excited and had spoken for about fifteen minutes, at the end of which Ayub Khan had not understood a single word. When the Governor General had ended his telephone conversation, Ayub Khan had wondered what it was all about and whether anything was expected of him. He then thought of telephoning his friend Iskander Mirza, the Defence Secretary, at Karachi. He told Iskandar Mirza that the Governor General had spoken with him for fifteen minutes but he had not understood a word of what he had said. "Don't worry", replied Iskander Mirza." he has just spoken with me and has told me that he has had a very satisfactory conversation with you."

VIP ON SHIKAR

One of the attractions of high office in Pakistan when Shikar was plentiful, were the opportunities for small game shooting. In the 50's and 60's, when the partridge and the chakore were still in plenty in Sind and Baluchistan, those above the law went out regularly during the shooting season in pursuit of these birds. Transportation by special aircraft or by road was never a problem for them, and beaters, whose job was to flush the birds out of scrub, were made available by the local administration. Where necessary, as was the case in sparsely populated Baluchistan, men of the Frontier Corp, a para-military organisation located on Pakistan's north western frontier, were used for this purpose. Indeed this 'operation' was for many of them the high spot in their career. They spent a good deal of their time rehearsing for the day when they would chase the harassed chakore and make it fly past the President. The local Commandant of this force made sure that these birds were fed throughout the year so that they did not leave his area in search of food. He planned the 'operation' carefully and since there was no immediate danger of a conflict with Afghanistan, he could not have spent his time more profitably. A successful shoot could mean a promotion or at least his name would be noted

as an efficient organiser. The wily civil servant was not far behind. He would use the opportunity to stay close to the President and whenever the opportunity arose, brief him on the efficiency of the administration and the progress the District had been making. Since the partridge was more easily available in the plains of Sind in comparison with the chakore in the mountains of Baluchistan, he could have a large number of these birds 'netted', put into improvised cages, hide them in the bush and have them released at the correct moment, so that the VIP's score reached respectable figures. The law limiting the number of birds allowed to be shot per gun was for the ordinary citizen and was conveniently forgotton. When on one occasion, a partridge flew past the President with a long string tied to its leg, there were a few titters and smiles but the President appeared not to notice it.

On another occasion, on a duck shoot on a lake in lower Sind, when the Shah of Iran was the guest, oriental hospitality was demonstrated to the full. The Shah accompanied by his Queen arrived with the Royal Game Warden, who was attired formally for the occasion with high boots, belts and about a dozen pockets. The conversation during the sumptuous breakfast on the bank of the lake, revealed that the Shah was not familiar with this kind of bird shooting and this could have been his first duck shoot. He was using a single barrel, five-shot gun and appeared quite determined to get a big score. The half a dozen or so 'shikaris' were each allotted a small boat which took them to their respective 'Butts' in the lake. These Butts were improvised or were on real islands in the lake and provided the shikari with a firm platform from which to shoot at the flying duck in the vicinity.

Duck shooting requires special skill and since the speed of the bird is considerable, high proficiency is required to bring the bird down. The birds migrate in the winter from parts of the Soviet Union as far away as Siberia and return to their natural habitat in the summer. They move at great speed and have an amazing capacity for navigating their way to their destination. In the three hours or so that the Shah remained in his 'Butt', he must have fired some 150 to 200 rounds and could be expected to have Bagged 30 to 40 duck. A good shot would in these conditions have got a higher score. Being in a 'Butt' close to that of the Shah, I had noticed that he was not dropping any birds. When the party assembled ashore, lunch was served and whilst the President and his guests took their lunch, the President's Military Secretary, himself a keen shikari and a very good shot, counted and laid out each person's bag. The lunch over, the President and the Shah emerged from the Shamiana and the Military Secretary approached the Shah. Standing to attention and with a straight face, he announced" Your Majesty, you got 35 duck." "What", said the surprised Shah, "I did not drop a single one". "They were wounded and fell far away, from where they were picked up," replied the Military Secretary retaining his presence of mind. The Shah was not convinced and just smiled.

At this particular lake, the host, a landlord, made sure that everyone had a respectable score. He would hide duck in improvised cages in strategic locations in the lake and these would be used to make up the numbers, at the end. No one looked very hard to see where the bird had been hit or whether it had been hit at all. The score was what mattered and our host saw to it that no one went away disappointed. There are no better hosts than our landed gentry.

THE LEFT EYE

On one occasion, after a very successful chakore shoot near Fort Sandeman in Baluchistan, when President Ayub Khan was enjoying his drink in the Officer's Mess, he was explaining to those present, his shooting technique and the reason for his usual high score. He had a lot of opportunities to shoot small game and had become quite an accomplished shot. He said that he found it remarkable that he usually shot the chakore in the head. Everyone present, who knew anything about chakore shooting, found this an odd statement but no one thought it fit to question it. When the chakore flies down hill, it moves at a very high speed and it requires a very experienced shot to bring it down. The bird is relatively small in size and its head is no more than an inch or an inch and a half in length. Amongst those present was Lieutenant General Burki, at one time the Director General of Armed Forces Medical Services and at that time a Minister in Ayub Khan's cabinet. Burki, who was Ayub Khan's contemporary, had known him since his early army days and had a great sense of humour. As every one looked at each other, Burki said that this was truly remarkable. He asked Ayub Khan how he could determine that the bird had been hit in the head. "That", Ayub Khan said, "was simple.

When the bird gets a pellet in the head, it flies vertically upwards and then drops dead." He said that he had noticed that most of the chakore that he dropped, flew upwards in this manner. Once again there was an uncomfortable silence until Burki spoke. Addressing those present he said that it was funny that when he fired, he always hit the bird in the left eye.

THE GOAT

Southern Sind, which was at one time the home of the partridge, is easily accessible from Karachi, and early on week end mornings hunting enthusiasts were to be found driving out to the interior in search of the unfortunate partridge or the visiting duck. Early one such morning I accompanied President Ayub Khan out of Karachi. On the way, Ayub Khan talked of the reforms that he had brought about, some of which he felt would have far-reaching effects on the country's economy. He said that one such reform was the elimination of the goat. He had passed an order, banning the keeping of goats. The goat, he said, had destroyed vegetation and along with the camel had been responsible for reducing much of the Middle East and North Africa to a desert. He said that the goat's saliva injects a kind of poison into the plant which arrests its growth. I recalled that on a visit to Spain, I had been told that before the Moors invaded Spain, the country was thickly wooded and was the hunting ground of Europe where the aristocracy of Europe hunted wild animals. During the eight hundred years of their rule, the camel and the goat that the Moors brought with them, destroyed vegetation and turned Spain into a barren land. After coming to power, General Franco created large olive

plantations all over the country, and flying over Spain one could see that afforestation has been carried out on a large scale and that the damage done by the camel and the goat had been largely repaired. However, I was skeptical about the battle waged against the goat in Pakistan and told the President that there had been no noticeable diminution in the number of goats. The goat was still around in very large numbers. He did not agree and seemed to think that it had virtually disappeared. A short while later, we saw a large herd of goats coming from the opposite direction on the road. The President noticed these too and was quick to say that these were being taken to the market to be slaughtered. They could well have been. After going a bit further, we came across another flock of goats, a few hundred strong, grazing in the fields close to the road. The President turned his face away. Nothing more was said about the goat which survived throughout Ayub Khan's ten years in office doing its best to reduce vegetation and making its contribution in bringing Pakistan as close in appearance to the Middle East as it feels spirtually related to that ancient land.

There is an interesting footnote to Ayub Khan's well-meant campaign against the goat. In order to speed up its elimination, Ayub Khan ordered that all army units would be supplied only goat's meat in preference to beef or sheep's meat. The result was not what he had expected. The demand for the goat grew and with it its breeding. The goat multiplied rapidly and when Ayub Khan ended his ten years in office, the goat was able to have the last laugh.

CORRUPTION

The President's shoots in Pakistan were a highly organised affair. District administrators vied with each other not only in producing the largest number of birds but also in the elaborate arrangements that go along with such an operation for a Head of State. *Shikargahs* or game preserves were opened for the President for such occasions, and a high score was therefore assured. I accompanied President Ayub Khan on one such shoot in the game preserve near Sakrand in Nawabshah District of Sind. The people of rural Sind were very poor and were badly clothed and generally poorly fed. I was therefore surprised to find the 'beaters', who were used to flush the birds from the scrub, dressed in clean white clothes – an unusual sight The clothes had obviously been provided by the administration and appeared to have served their purpose for at the end of the day, the President was satisfied not only with a respectable bag but also with the sights of affluence that he had seen in the poorest section of our rural society.

On his way back, the President addressed the 'Basic Democrats' at Nawabshah airport before his departure for Karachi. On his shooting excursions he usually combined

business with pleasure, and it was his practice to keep in touch with these people, 80,000 in all, who formed the electoral college to elect the President as well as the National Assembly. The 'Basic Democrats' of Nawabshah District had been assembeld under the *shamiana* or a large canopy and the President addressed them for some fifteen or twenty minutes, after which there was a question and answer session. I had stayed away near the aircraft and had not heard the proceedings, but when the President returned to board the plane, he appeared upset. Ayub Khan showed his moods on his face and when he was angry, his face was even ruddier than usual. When he had been seated in his special 'Viscount' aircraft, he opened up a newspaper and kept reading it for a few minutes. Then turning suddenly to one of his ministers, he said that something would have to be done about corruption. The Minister and the others kept silent. I was seated near the President and not knowing what had gone on in the meeting of the 'Basic Democrats', said that corruption had indeed reached unprecedented heights and was the cause of much criticism against his government. This appeared to have stirred up the President, who had a great deal to say to his government and political companions accompanying him on this trip.

Later, as the aircraft approached Karachi, and the President's temper had cooled off, one of the party, a well-known landlord courtier of Sind, sought the President's permission to express his views on the problem of corruption. Permission was readily granted and this gentleman started by saying that never before had the country progressed as rapidly as it had in the last few years of Ayub Khan's benign rule. He said that prosperity was now widespread and had reached the remotest hamlet in Sind. Had he not, he asked, seen the 'beaters' in a backward district like Nawabshah

dressed in clean clothes looking radiant and happy. He said that it was very moving for him, when he visited the remotest parts of the province in connection with his shooting trips to hear people pray for the President's health and long life. It was evident that the President was receptive to what this person had to say and appeared to be liking what he had heard so far. The gentleman therefore continued his speech and said that so far as corruption was concerned, there was hardly any country in the world that was free from this curse. He said that in India and Pakistan, it was as old as one could remember. It was there before the Mughuls and continued throughout the British rule. The Mughuls institutionalised it and it became a way of life. The British continued these traditions. Does not every one know, he asked, that if the Sahib was reluctant to accept a bribe, the mem-sahib could be relied upon to accept a present. Receiving baskets of fruit, called 'dalis' by officials from visitors was a routine practice during the British days which was not considered irregular, and if someone turned up empty-handed it was frowned upon. This is the system that we have inherited, he said, and it would be dishonest to say that there has been any decline in this respect during the last few years. By then the President had been almost persuaded that this was a sensible analysis of this problem and nodded his agreement with what he had heard.

On seeing that he had swung the President round to his views, this person changed the volume and tone of his speech. He became more self-assured—almost aggressive— and asked whether he knew the person who had spoken in the Basic Democrats meeting maligning the administration and claiming that corruption was on the increase. When the President said that he did not, he added that the Basic Democrat who had spoken in this manner was a thoroughly unreliable man

who had been Miss Jinnah's election agent in the recently held Presidential election. He added that this person had been carrying Miss Jinnah's election symbol, a 'lantern' and had been soliciting votes for her. He had never had a good word for the President and had never lost an opportunity to criticize the Government and had, therefore, only done in this meeting what he had been doing for a long time. Such people, he said, lost no opportunity to damage the President's and the country's fair name. The President had by then been fully convinced that the man who had spoken of corruption and had criticized his government was a mischief-maker and said, "he did look a nasty character." He then turned to his minister and added, "Will you speak to the Deputy Commissioner and ask him to fix him."

BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING

After the Indo-Pakistan war of September 1965 and the Tashkent talks that followed it in January 1966, I began to notice that I was being watched. This could have been the case even earlier when I was the Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistan Air Force, but if this was so, these duties were performed discreetly. In 1966, when I was the chief executive of the national airline, I noticed that I was followed to the office, and back, by a person on a motor cycle. Another person would hang around my place of residence. I did not pay any attention to this until one of my staff reported that this person wanted all kinds of information about my programme, names of visitors, etc. He asked why I should be kept under surviellance like this.

I had commanded the air force for eight years and had left it recently to take over the running of the national airline. During the eight years, I had concentrated only on my professional responsibilities and had worked very hard to make the PAF into a first class fighting machine. The proof of this was provided in the 1965 war. However, I had always given the government frank and sometimes unpalatable advice. Also because of my earlier acquaintance with

him during the course of duty, I had always treated Hussain Shaheed Soharwardy, the former Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, with courtesy and respect whenever I had the opportunity to meet him on social occasions. This regretfully was not the norm in Pakistan where people even remotely connected with Government usually keep away from anyone in the Government's bad books and Soharwardy had been disqualified by Ayub Khan from taking part in politics. I also knew Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, the former Foreign Minister, who was also at the time persona non grata with the government, and met him on a few social occasions.

Not being accustomed to this kind of surveillance, which I found irksome, I thought that I should do something about it. Before I could decide how to go about it, Wing Commander Mukhtar Ahmad Dogar who was the head of Air Force intelligence came to see me. Dogar was an upright and straightforward officer and he told me that he had been asked by Inter-Services Intelligence to have his organisation carry out surveillance on me. He said that he had objected to this but had been advised to do as he was told. Dogar said that he found this highly distasteful and it was, he felt, a disgrace that he should be carrying out surveillance on his former service chief who had until so recently been responsible for the country's air defence. After speaking with Dogar, I decided to talk this over with the President, Field Marshal Ayub Khan, and sought an interview.

In my meeting with the President, I told him that I was under surveillance and since the President's personal safety, whenever he flew with the national airline—which was very often—was my responsibility, I would ask that I should be replaced by someone in whom he had confidence. He asked me how I had come to the conclusion that I was being

watched. I told him that I was followed everywhere and was in no doubt that this was being done by Intelligence. He was not convinced and thought that I might be imagining. To reinforce my conclusion, I told him of Dogar's conversation with me. This seemed to have clinched the matter and the President said, "That bloody fool, he should do his job and you should not mind. Let them do their job and you do yours."

In the years since, I have learnt to accept tapping of telephones and mobile surveillance as a part of life, and indeed I miss "big.brother" if he is not trailing behind whenever I leave the door of my house.

A SWEDE'S COLD NIGHT

The Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Swedish air force and his wife were the guests of the Pakistan Air Force one winter. One of the places on the General's itinerary was Gilgit, and my wife and I accompanied them on this visit. At Gilgit we were the guests of the Political Agent in whose house we were to stay for the night. After a very pleasant evening and dinner at the Political Agent's house, my wife and I bade our guests "good night" and retired to our room. Gilgit can be very cold in the winter with temperatures below freezing, but our night was comfortable and we slept very well.

We were up early the next morning and met our host, who told us that the bearer who took the morning tea for our guests had told him that the General appeared unwell. He explained that when the bearer had entered their room, he had found the General and his wife in one bed with the mattress of the second bed as well as its blankets on top of them. The General, he said, was wearing his uniform great-coat and hat in bed. Although there was nothing unusual about husband and wife sleeping in the same bed, we won-

dered why they should have had the mattress on top and why the General should have donned his greatcoat and uniform hat. Just then, our guests came out of their room looking well enough and I asked them whether they had a comfortable night. "Very comfortable", replied the General. The Swedes are a very polite and formal people and I felt that there was more to it than that. A short while later when my wife enquired from the General's wife, she told her in confidence of their experience the previous night. She said that they had only two blankets each, and after the fire in the room died out, it was very cold. They therefore, slept in one bed and in order to keep warm, put the mattress and the blankets of the other bed on top as well. She said that her husband had to put on his socks and overcoat to keep warm and since he was bald, he felt the need to keep his uniform hat on, as well. She explained that since their houses in Sweden were centrally heated and were kept warm even when the temperature was below freezing outside, they were not accustomed to this cold. When asked why they had not asked for more blankets, she explained that they had thought that it would be impolite to do so. She was anxious that my wife should not mention a word of this to their host, who had been very kind and considerate. However, I told our host, the Political Agent, of the experience of his Swedish guests. I told him that my wife and I had been given a quilt and three blankets each and wondered why he had not given enough blankets to the General and his wife. Our host was very apologetic and appeared surprised at the experience of his European guests. He explained that he had thought that Sweden was a very cold country and therefore his Swedish guests would find the winter nights in Gilgit mild by comparison. He said that he had plenty of quilts and blankets but had thought that these would not be required and that two blankets each would be more than enough.

PROBLEM OF SECURITY

President Iskandar Mirza was on a visit to Turkey in mid 1958 when a bloody coup in Baghdad ended the Iraqi government of Nuri es Said. The President was to fly back to Karachi when I was rung up one afternoon by the Prime Minister, Feroz Khan Noon. The Prime Minister sounded agitated and wanted me to come over to his residence at once. When I arrived at the Prime Minister's house, I found him pacing up and down in his study. He lost no time in explaining to me the purpose of his having called me to see him. I was the Commander-in-Chief of the air force and the Prime Minister had information from a person, who, he said, was "very reliable" that the President's plane, a special Pakistan air force aircraft would be shot down when it flew from Ankara to Tehran on its way to Karachi the next day. I asked him who would shoot the aircraft down and was told that Iraq was likely to do this when the aircraft flew over Iraqi territory. I explained that the aircraft did not have to overfly Iraqi territory when flying between Ankara and Tehran. " In that case", the Prime Minister said, "the Russians could shoot it down." I expressed the opinion that this was most unlikely. The aircraft would be flying in Turkish and Iranian air space, well away from Soviet terri-

tory and it would not be possible for them to do this even if they wanted to. "Moreover", I asked, "why should the Russians want to do this?" At this the Prime Minister expressed his annoyance and asked if I did not know what had happened in Baghdad. He went on to say that he did not know who would do this, but he was convinced that such an attempt would be made and that I should take all necessary precautions to ensure the President's safety. Since the Prime Minister was so convinced that his information was reliable and that the President's life was in danger, I told him that the safety of the President's flight could easily be ensured by ordering the flight between Ankara and Tehran to take place during the hours of darkness. I told the Prime Minister that at night no one could intercept the aircraft on the route that it would be following. This appeared to satisfy the Prime Minister who asked me to go ahead and make the necessary alterations in the programme of the President's return flight.

Just as I was preparing to leave, N. M. Khan, the Commissioner of Karachi, was shown in and engaged in a conversation with the Prime Minister. He said that the press was carrying out a campaign to the effect that security arrangements for the Prime Minister's safety at Eid congregational prayers were "unIslamic." The newspapers, he said, were suggesting that the Prime Minister, instead of standing in the front row with security people in the next few rows behind him should stand with the ordinary people as should be done in an "Islamic" society. N. M. Khan asked whether the Prime Minister wished to make a change on the occasion of Eid which was due in a few days. The Prime Minister was silent for a while and taking advantage of the gap in the conversation, I sought his permission to leave to make the necessary arrangements for the President's flight from

Ankara. He replied that I should wait for a while and asked me my opinion about the problem posed by N. M. Khan. I replied that there was a lot of weight in what the newspapers said and suggested that since the Prime Minister's purpose in attending the main congregational prayers was partly publicity, the purpose could be as well served by going to one of the numerous Eid congregations in the city without any security staff, take his place with the ordinary people and offer his prayers. This, I said, would please God and man alike and would also be safer than standing in a place where any would-be assassin would expect him to be on that day. The Prime Minister looked at me suspiciously and turning to N. M. Khan said, "thirty-six Muslim Heads of State have been assassinated in (so many) years, (I do not recall the number now) whilst offering their prayers. Don't listen to what Asghar Khan has said and don't bother with what the newspapers are writing. Follow the procedure that you have been following and make the usual security arrangements."

I took leave of the Prime Minister, leaving N. M. Khan there. Eid prayers as also the President's flight from Ankara passed off safely. However, a few weeks later, President Iskandar Mirza, in a military coup, overthrew the civilian government of Feroz Khan Noon.

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THE SENIOR SERVICE

On one occasion, following disturbances in Liaquatabad, a politically sensitive area of Karachi, curfew was imposed in the locality. The situation had deteriorated because of the high-handedness of a protege of the Government. Liaquatabad had been handed over to the military who were patrolling the area and had powers to shoot at any one disobeying curfew regulations. In spite of these measures, the situation had continued to worsen and there was open defiance of authority. I was at the time on a visit to Karachi and came to the conclusion that the Government was insensitive to the public mood and that strong-arm methods would lead to disturbances on a yet wider scale. Some people had been killed for defiance of the curfew and more deaths could be expected.

In order to help save the situation, I decided to visit the area to implore the people to show respect for the law and avoid violence and bloodshed. I was greeted on arrival in Liaquatabad by a very large crowd and addressed them asking them to be peaceful. The Pakistan Navy had been given responsibility for this part of the city, and although my activities were in themselves a breach of the law, I was not

interfered with. Indeed the determination of the large crowd that had assembled would have made this impossible, and it would probably have been inpracticable for the small detachment of Naval personnel that was present in the area to enforce the law without considerable bloodshed. My speech appeared to have had the desired result, and I was satisfied, that the people of Liaquatabad would disperse peacefully. The climax to my visit was, however, yet to come.

As I left the improvised stage, the public insisted that I should proceed to the graves of those who had been killed by police firing on the previous day. Knowing that this would mean moving in a procession and that this would be a more blatant defiance of the curfew, I told the crowd that no procession should be taken out. However, the sheer pressure of the crowd propelled me forward and I was almost carried on to the main Liaquatabad highway and towards the road crossing some four hundred yards ahead, where those killed had been buried. A large crowd followed. There was no retreat and I resigned myself to my fate.

We had marched hardly a hundred yards when we were confronted by a Naval contingent which was accompanied by a magistrate. A young Naval Lieutenant lined up his body of some 20 sailors in front of us and saluting me smartly, addressed me in clear tones.

"Sir", he said, "There is a curfew in force in this area and no one is permitted to be out of doors. The Magistrate has asked me to tell you that this assembly is illegal. You should not move any further and if you do, the magistrate warns that serious consequences will follow." At the end of this brief speech, he again saluted me smartly. He was calm and had a discernable smile on his face. I did not think that

after being administered such a warning, a retreat was politically desirable and was convinced that this pleasant-looking Lieutenant would not order his men to fire to prevent us from advancing. I also knew that even if I had wanted to retreat, the crowd, which was surging forward, would have made this impossible. I therefore told him that this was a peaceful crowd which wanted to offer 'fateha' at the graves of those buried at the road crossing ahead. We would, I told him, go only as far as the road crossing and then leave. He stood motionless still wearing a smile, and we began to move forward. The Lieutenant turned his men around and marched away accompanied by the magistrate, who appeared very unhappy.

When we had moved forward another two hundred yards or so and were still some distance from the burial place, another naval contingent accompanied by another magistrate appeared and blocked our path. The Naval Lieutenant in command was a different Officer this time. He ordered his men to line up facing us in two rows and in a shrill and excited voice ordered the front line 'down' in the kneeling position. Then in an even shriller voice he ordered them to load their rifles. Having completed these alarming movements, he walked up a few paces and saluted me, his hand shaking with excitement and his eyes popping out of his head. "Sir", he said" if you move any further, I have orders to shoot." He was near enough for me to see his facial muscles twitching. It was a very different sight from the one I had seen earlier with the first Naval detachment and this was a very different person. I knew instinctively that the Lieutenant meant what he said and thought it would be a pity if, having survived my 25 years in the Air Force, I was to die at the hands of a Naval Lieutenant on the roads of Liaquatabad. It was another matter that the Navy would

never live this down, and this nervous young man appeared oblivious of the lasting schism his misguided action would create between the two sister services. Having quickly appreciated the situation, I addressed the crowd knowing that few, if any, understood the language (English) in which the young Lieutenant had spoken. "Let us pray for the young men who gave their lives to end tyranny and who lie buried ahead," I said as if we had already reached our intended destination. The crowd raised their hands in prayer. We were within sight of the graves and having offered *fateha,* we turned back. The nervous Lieutenant stood his ground obviously satisfied that the honour of his service had been upheld.

ORGANISED CRITICISM

Addressing my first organised public meeting in Lahore in March 1969, I said that I was against the establishment of a government run by Maulvis. The crowd cheered this statement, but for the next few days I was bombarded by statements and letters in newspapers for making such an 'un-Islamic' remark. It appeared that I had touched the nation's raw nerve and had been guilty of a grave political indiscretion. It was even suggested to me that I should issue a statement to the press withdrawing these remarks as otherwise the 'Islam-loving' public would be offended.

I did not do this, and a few days later, at the Round Table Conference at Rawalpindi, Maulana Maudoodi, the Amir of the *Jama'at-i-Islami,* came up to me and asked me what I had meant when I said the other day, that I did not favour a government of Maulvis. I was taken a little by surprise at the Maulana's enquiry and replied simply that as far as I knew, Islam did not advocate a government by any particular group nor did it advocate a government of the clergy. The Maulana said, "You are absolutely right. Islam does not advocate government by any particular class" and added, "I will stop this criticism against you."

The significance of his remark, that he would stop criticism against me, did not register at that time but I was surprised when in a day or two, letters and press statements against me in the press ceased completely.

POLITICS MILITARY STYLE

After sweeping the polls in East Pakistan in the elections of December 1970 Sheikh Mujibur Rehaman of the Awami League adopted an uncompromising stand on the question of provincial autonomy. When Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of the Pakistan People's Party, which had emerged as the majority party in the Punjab and Sind, adopted an equally inflexible stand, political tension began to mount. The president at the time, General Yahya Khan, suggested that Mujibur Rehman should visit West Pakistan to discuss with him and West Pakistani political leaders the issues involved, with a view to finding their solution. For various reasons, Mujibur Rehman declined to do this and said that he was busy with party matters and could not leave Dacca.

Mujibur Rehman's refusal to comply with Yahya Khan's wishes angered the General who instructed the Governor in East Pakistan, Admiral Ahsan, to summon Mujibur Rehman and convey the President's disapproval of his reply and direct him to come to Rawalpindi forthwith. The terse message received by wireless was in typical military language and had an admonishing tone about it. The admiral thought that it would be most unwise to convey the message

to the Sheikh in the form it had been received, but before toning it down, decided to consult the President's Principal Staff Officer, another General. He therefore spoke with him at Rawalpindi on the telephone and explained that Mujibur Rehman was a highly emotional person. He said that he was certain that, flushed with his sweeping victory at the polls and because of the rebellious mood he was in, any hint of an order from the President would aggravate matters. He suggested that he should be given the discretion to persuade Mujibur Rehman to visit West Pakistan in a manner and in language most likely to achieve this purpose. The President's Principal Staff Officer said he would speak to the President and then let him know. The Governor was contacted a short while later and told that he was not to change one word of what had been conveyed to him already and the message as written was to be read out to Mujibur Rehman at 7 P.M that evening. He was also told that he was to contact Mujibur Rehman forthwith. The Governor, a highly intelligent person, was taken aback. He was certain that Mujibur Rehman would hit the roof when the message was read out to him. The message addressed to the Governor read something like this "To Governor East Pakistan stop You are to summon Sheikh Mujibur Rehman to Government house and read out the following message to him from the President of Pakistan."Quote I take a serious view of your refusal to visit me at Rawalpindi and direct that you should comply with my wishes forthwith stop Your refusal to come to Rawalpindi will lead to serious consequences for you and the Awami league unquote."

Having failed to persuade Yahya Khan to delegate the choice of words to him, the Governor proceeded to comply with the President's wishes and summoned Mujibur Rehman to the Government house at 7 that evening. He also asked

the General Officer Commanding, East Pakistan, to be present at this meeting. The Sheikh arrived, little knowing why he had been called to the Government house. The Governor spent a few minutes in making light conversation with the purpose of getting the normally tense Mujibur Rehman into a relaxed and friendly frame of mind before reading out the message to him. This took a little time, the General growing restive at the delay. The General's expression suggested that the Governor should read out the message and get it over. Ahsan, certain of Mujibur Rehman's explosive reaction on hearing the message, had been hesitating to carry out the President's instructions, but at last his sense of duty prevailed and he decided to comply with the orders that he had received. Before taking out the message to read, he asked Mujibur Rehman in a pleasant and friendly manner as to why he had been unable to accept the President's invitation to visit Rawalpindi. Mujibur Rehman explained that he was busy with the drafting of the constitution and other party matters and, moreover, his party people did not want him to leave Dacca at this time.

There was nothing more that Ahsan could do. The General was showing signs of impatience at the delay, and the Governor thought that the time had come to read out the message. Just then an A. D. C. walked in and told the Governor that Air Marshal Nur Khan wished to speak to him urgently on the telephone from the President's house at Rawalpindi. Nur Khan was not in the government, having retired from the post of Governor of West Pakistan. Ahsan left the room to speak to Nur Khan, who asked him whether he had read out the President's message to Mujibur Rehman. Ahsan replied that he had not but was about to do so when he was called to the telephone. "Well, don't do it", said Nur Khan and explained that President Yahya Khan had

asked him to contact Ahsan and convey this message to him. Ahsan was relieved and returned to where Mujibur Rehman and the General were seated, and after some more conversation, explained to Mujibur Rehman, much to the General's surprise, that he had asked him to come to the Government house only because they had not met for some time and in order to renew their contact. Mujibur Rehman therefore departed without having been made aware of the contents of the President's message, leaving a much relieved Admiral wondering what had made Yahya Khan suddenly change his mind.

Some days later, Nur Khan visited Dacca and met Ahsan. The Governor enquired about the background to their telephonic conversation and the message that he had conveyed on behalf of President Yahya Khan. Nur Khan explained that he happened to have gone to call on the President one evening when during their conversation, Yahya Khan had told him very casually that at about that time, Ahsan would be conveying his displeasure to Sheikh Mujibur Rehman for his refusal to visit him at Rawalpindi. He had told Nur Khan how this displeasure was to be conveyed and the gist of the message. Nur Khan thought that Mujibur Rehman would not be able to swallow such an insult and told Yahya Khan so. At that time of the evening Yahya Khan was generally in a light-hearted mood and did not need any persuasion to change his mind.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH

In a TV programme the other day, a student recited some verses of mediocre poetry that she had composed in English. The audience was almost completely Non-English speaking but she received a tremendous ovation. This appreciation of English by an audience, the great majority of whom did not understand the language, reminded me of my experience a few years earlier when I had been invited to address the Gujranwala District Bar Association. Before I arrived there, it was suggested to me by one of our Party's Senior local lawyers, that I sholuld address the Bar in English. I had replied that I would gladly do so if the President of the Bar Association introduced me in English. I felt that if the introductory remarks were in Urdu, it would be appropriate that I too spoke in Urdu. He said that this could be arranged.

I was received on arrival by the Bar President and taken to the Bar room. Since it was a summer morning, the doors and windows of the Bar room had been kept open. The Bar room, its surroundings and the verandahs were packed with lawyers, their clerical staff and the large crowd which is normally found in our courts in connection with their cases.

The President of the Bar introduced me in English so I, too, spoke in English. On such occasions my personal secretary, who accompanied me, usually mingled with the audience to find out their reaction to the various issues dealt with in the speech. When we left, I asked my Secretary what the public reaction had been. He said that the audience was very impressed, particularly those who did not understand any English at all.

At the end of the election campaign of 1970, political leaders were given the opportunity to address the people on Radio and TV. Every one, except Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, did so in one of the national languages. He, however, spoke in English, a language that probably not more than 5 % of the electorate understood. The speech was greatly appreciated by the vast majority of the people, who did not understand a word of what Bhutto had to say, and the Pakistan People's Party won a resounding victory at the polls in two of the major provinces of West Pakistan. This success of the PPP was not the result of their leader's Radio and T.V. speech alone, but it did show that the language of the country's earlier rulers still influences people's thinking in Pakistan. Colonial traditions die very hard.

THE MAHSUD GUARD

During the People's Party rule in Pakistan, my party and I had to struggle under very difficult conditions to make ourselves heard. Our public meetings were often attacked by People's Party workers and Federal Security men in plain clothes. With the backing of the police and the administration that these people enjoyed, holding a public meeting was no mean achievement. At these meetings of the Tehrik-i-Istaqlal, People's Party workers were armed with automatic weapons which they could use with impunity. The police closed their eyes to such unlawful interruptions and thereby forced us to look after our own security. I had a few armed guards from the tribal area of the North West Frontier Province who accompanied me on such occasions. Accustomed to their rugged mountains and tribal life, they had not experienced this kind of political activity. However, they adjusted thesmselves to this new life and were always alert and courageous. Moving around under fire and the sound of revolver or rifle shots was not a new experience for them. A couple of them would position themselves at the rear of the crowd and one or two would remain near the stage always vigilant and suspicious of any move that might endanger my safety.

During a period of unusual repression, we decided to hold a public meeting at Rawalpindi. As expected, the People's Party tried to break up the meeting and the police did nothing to prevent them from disturbing a lawful assembly. As the situation in and around the meeting ground deteriorated, the PPP workers and their supporters began to use fire arms to intimidate the public. I continued my speech in spite of these interruptions and at one point, things became quite serious. When a group of PPP men, not far from the stage, brandishing their weapons, appeared to be approaching the stage and were being engaged by our supporters, I noticed the barrel of a rifle moving from left to right over my shoulder and pointing towards the crowd in front of me. I looked back and saw one of my guard, a Mahsud and retired subedar of the Soth Waziristan Scouts, aiming at the crowd with his rifle. I immediately pulled the barrel of his rifle down and telling him not to point his rifle at the crowd, I resumed my speech.

After a few minutes, as the disturbance grew, I again noticed the barrel of my guard's rifle pointing at the crowd, moving from side to side. This time I addressed him sternly, told him not to repeat this and ordered him off the stage. At the end of the meeting, when I returned to where I was staying, I noticed this person sulking in one corner of the compound. I called him and enquired why he had been pointing his rifle at the crowd. I explained that most of those present were our supporters, and weapons were meant to be used only in self-defence. The Mahsud was very agitated and looking at me in disgust said, "Do you think I am a fool ? I was only trying to frighten them."

I had to explain that if he had succeeded in frightening the public, there would be no one left to listen to what I

had to say. After some explaining he understood the point and abstained in future from trying to 'frighten the public' whom we had invited to listen to us.

WHAT THEN IS THE ANSWER ?

After the rigging of the March 1977 elections, when the movement launched by the Pakistan National Alliance against Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's government had been going on for a couple of months, the Prime Minister decided to negotiate with the leaders of the PNA. Some of us were therefore moved from our respective prisons to the police rest house at Sihala near Rawalpindi. During our stay there, the Prime Minister decided to meet the President of the PNA, Maulana Mufti Mahmud. It was arranged that the meeting would take place in the lounge of the police rest house which was in the block where Mufti Mahmud was lodged. The other prisoners, about eight in number, were moved for the duration of this meeting to a barrack further away so that they would not be around when the Prime Minister's meeting with Mufti Mahmud took place.

The Prime Minister arrived for the meeting with two Generals and the usual paraphernalia that accompanies VIP's in Pakistan. Whilst the Prime Minister settled down to a conversation with Mufti Mahmud, a young army officer hung up a large map of Pakistan showing substantial parts of Indian and Afghan territories on Pakistan's Eastern and

Western borders. The map had a large number of red flags on Indian and Afghan territory and relatively fewer green flags on Paksitan territory. When the preliminaries had been completed, the Prime Minister told Mufti Mahmud that he wished to brief him on the serious military threat that had been created on Pakistan's Eastern and Western frontiers. He then asked one of the Generals to commence his briefing. The General subjected Maulana Mufti Mahmud to a detailed briefing of the defence problems facing Pakistan, the size and shape of the opposing forces, problems of communications, depth, weapon capability and the numerous other details that usually form a part of such briefings. This was Mufti Mahmud's first such experience and, not being accustomed to military terminology, he was at a loss to understand what it was all about. The General emphasized the heavy odds facing Pakistan and in order to drive home his point, repeattedly made references to the size of the opposing forces in different sectors. The point he made was clearly illustrated by the number of red and green flags on the map indicating, the locations of Indian and Afghan forces in red and Pakistani forces in green. Even to one who did not understand the complexities of defence, the number of red and green flags vividly illustrated the seriousness of the military problem with which Pakistan was faced.

Mufti Mahmud listened very carefully to the briefing, wondering all the time what this had to do with the political negotiations for which we had been brought to Sihala. As he listened to the General who was briefing him, the Prime Minister, instead of looking at the General or at the map, kept looking at Mufti Mahmud. He appeared to be trying to guage whether the briefing was having the desired effect on the Maulana. When the briefing had been completed, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto asked Mufti Mahmud whether he had

understood the grave military threat with which Pakistan was faced. Mufti Mahmud replied simply that he had indeed been alarmed at the serious threat facing the country. The Prime Minister was not able to conceal his delight at the reply he had tried so hard to elicit and asked, "Mufti Sahib, what then is the answer. " There was a long pause, the Maulana looked at the map and then at the Prime Minister and replied simply," election." Mufti Mahmud was not subjected to such a briefing again during our stay at Sihala.

DOES IT HURT?

I was lodged in Sahiwal prison and kept in isolation during the summer of 1977. It was apparently decided that some of us should be made to realise that opposition to the government does not pay. The prison authorities had therefore been instructed to make me as uncomfortable as possible. I learnt of this when the jail superintendent visited me one day and asked how I was. I told him that I was fine and had no complaints. The jail superintendent was an elderly man and from what little I had seen of him, appeared a reasonable person. He kept sitting without saying another word and after some time started weeping. I was surprised at this unusual behaviour and enquired as to what was troubling him. Controlling himself with some difficulty, he told me that he had just returned from a conference of the superintendents of prisons of the Punjab at Lahore which had been called by the Punjab Minister of Prisons. He said that the minister had instructed him that I was to be subjected to a certain kind of treatment. He went on to say that the minister had told him clearly that if he did not do what he had been told, he would be dismissed and replaced by someone who would be prepared to carry out these instructions. Sobbing quietly, the jail superintendent

asked me as to what he should do in these circumstances. He added that if he refused to obey these instructions some-one else would replace him. I replied that so far as I was concerned, I was prepared for the worst and would suggest that he should go ahead and do what he had been ordered to do. I would not like to be the cause of his losing his job. The superintendent appeared very unhappy at the thought of carrying out his instructions which he was obviously finding distasteful. He did not tell me what these instructions were but said that since my cell was locked up at night, he would not permit anyone to enter it. He said that he would not carry out the more objectionable part of his instructions but short of that, he would have to do some other things to make me uncomfortable.

After the superintendent left me, the electricity of my cell was cut off which stopped the ceiling fan and made the cell unbearably hot. This and other minor discomforts at one of the hottest places in the Punjab, at the hottest time of the year, resulted in making my stay at Sahiwal distinctly unpleasant. The environmental reaction, indifferent food, excessive heat and life in isolation resulted in a loss of weight which began to show. I was therefore not at my best when my brother was granted permission by the Lahore High Court to see me in prison. We had a brief meeting and he must have been upset at seeing my condition for on his return to Lahore, he put in a writ in the High Court saying that he had been shocked at seeing my deteriorated health and felt that the government could well have been playing foul. He prayed that the court should direct a panel of doctors to examine me. Accordingly, one very hot morning I was pleasantly suprised to see the ceiling fan start moving again. After a few minutes, two eminent doctors walked into my cell and told me that they had been sent by

Lahore High Court to examine me.

It is not uncommon in Pakistan for political prisoners, sometimes for genuine medical reasons, but occasionally merely to escape the rigours of prison life, to seek admission to hospitals. The doctors are generally sympathetic towards political prisoners and where any latitude can be given, they adopt a lenient and sympathetic attitude towards the prisoner. These two doctors asked me how I felt, and I told them that I felt as well as any one could in these conditions. They then carried out a few simple tests. The questions they asked and their manner suggested that they would be very willing to recommend moving me to a hospital if I so desired and if I gave them some excuse to do so. One of the tests involved pushing a hand with outstretched fingers into the side of the abdomen. As the doctor pushed his hand into my side, he asked if it hurt. I told him that it did not. He then pushed his hand sharply into my side and asked again whether it hurt this time. I replied that if he tried hard enough, it would certainly hurt. On my insistence that I was perfectly alright, the two doctors completed a superficial kind of examination and departed. The fan stopped a few minutes later and I continued living the same dreary life in Sahiwal prison.

I learnt later that when the doctors had presented their report to the High Court pronouncing me fit, they had been severely criticized by their lordships. By a coincidence, one of them had been promoted two days after his visit to Sahiwal to the post of Director General of Health, and this promotion made their report suspect in the eyes of the court. Their lordships noted that they had not carried out any X-ray examination, had not taken my blood and urine test and had not checked my blood pressure. They observed that

one of them had been promoted immediately after his visit to Sahiwal. Not believing the doctor's truthful statement that I had said that I felt perfectly well, and suspicious that the government had used its influence, the court directed that I should be visited by another doctor alongwith a bailiff from the court. A few days later, when my fan began to move again, I knew that I had visitors. When the doctor and the bailiff met me, I assured them that there was nothing wrong with me and asked them to convey to the court my gratitude for their concern for my well-being. This was when the courts had more freedom than they enjoy today.

COME LET US TALK

I was detained in Sahiwal prison when Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, Pakistan's Prime Minister, decided to negotiate with the opposition. He had released all the leaders of the Pakistan National Alliance from various prisons but would not agree to release me. He prepared to start his talks with the opposition leaders whilst I remained in prison. However, on the insistence of Maulana Mufti Mehmud, the President of the PNA, that I must be released before the PNA could negotiate, he reluctantly agreed to release me too.

I had been kept in solitary confinement in abominable conditions but one of the luxuries I was allowed was a radio. Through this facility I kept myself informed of the major political developments in the country and of the assembly of other leaders of the PNA at Rawalpindi. Not being aware at the time of the Prime Minister's reluctance to release me, I was wondering why I was being kept in prison when the others had been freed. Then one evening I heard on the 10 PM World Service news of the BBC that I too had been set free. It is the normal practice in Pakistani prisons that detenus are released during day-time. I therefore went to bed expecting to be informed about my release by the prison staff the next morning.

I had hardly lain down when the jail superintendent called and told me what I had already heard on BBC news. He enquired as to my programme, and I informed him that since it was now late, I would leave the next morning. He wanted to know how I would leave and what my destination would be. I replied that I had not yet decided and that initially I would go to the residence of our party's Chairman in Sahiwal and may be from there to Lahore. He appeared unhappy with my answer and rather hesitatingly told me that a police party had come to take me to Rawalpindi. Although I was aware of the assembly of other PNA leaders in Rawalpindi and the likelihood of their wanting me to join them there, I thought it odd that the police should be told to escort me there, after I had been pronounced a free man. I therefore told the superintendent of the prison that since I was now free, I would myself decide where I went and that it might not necessarily be Rawalpindi. This seemed to have got him worried and he left me for a while. He returned shortly afterwards to tell me that the government was adamant that I should leave for Rawalpindi and that the police party would take me there. I again told him that I would not go with the police and asked him to leave me alone so that I could get some sleep.

Having failed to persuade me, the superintendent left but soon afterwards the Assistant Superintendent of the prison, who was incharge of my cell, came with a police officer to repeat in a more authoritative tone what the prison superintendent had told me already. I told both these gentlemen to leave as it was already rather late and I wanted to sleep. Some time later, these two persons returned with half a dozen tough looking men clad only in loin cloth. These half-naked men, who were probably criminals, stood around my bed as I lay on it. Whilst the Assistant Superintendent

and the police officer told me that there would be dire consequences if I did not agree to leave, these people stood around me with arms folded on their chests trying to look ferocious. They did not need to do this because most of them were ugly enough without making ugly faces. This demonstration of ill-manners infuriated me, and I told the Assistant Superintendent of the Prison that this kind of hooliganism would not make me change my mind and that they should "Get out" and let me sleep. By then it was about 2 A.M. and after standing around for some time, they left my cell.

Thinking that I had now been left alone, I prepared to rest and had hardly gone to sleep when I was startled to find myself on the floor with my bed on top of me. The Assistant Superintendent of the prison, the police officer and some twenty police men were surrounding me. I had hardly recovered when I saw my belongings being taken out of the cell. These belongings and I were packed into a car which had been brought into the prison compound, outside the entrance to my cell. This unusual task was performed by uniformed policemen and as I was being pushed into the car in my night pyjamas, one of them who was probably one of those who had thrown me out of my bed, raised his hands in prayer looking up towards heaven, he said in a loud voice, "May God protect you and may you succeed in your mission."

With a police jeep and a police truck escorting me, I was driven at break-neck speed, non-stop, to Rawalpindi and we made the 300 mile journey in record time. It was an unusual invitation for talks to resolve our differences.

MY QUICKEST MEAL

After having served in the Pakistan Air Force for twenty five years I had begun to take part in national political life. During the 70's I was opposing the policies of the Government and was at the receiving end of its wrath. Opposition to Government was a hazardous pastime and it was made abundantly clear in many ways that the government considered me politically an 'undesirable' person, contacts with whom were to be avoided by government servants and state functionaries.

In the circumstances I was a little surprised when one day I received an invitation, from the Air Force, to the annual reunion of retired Pakistan Air Force personnel. These reunions were held annually but because of my political opposition to the Government I had not been invited to them previously. It was evident that some one had slipped up and that the invitation had been sent to me in error. The programme included an invitation to witness a parade at the Pakistan Air Force station followed by a 'get-together' of ex-servicemen and then a lunch for retired and serving officers in the officer's mess and for other service personnel separately.

The years of one's Youth are always precious memory and then I had been privileged to head the Pakistan Air Force for eight of the twenty five years, I had spent in it. In the nine or ten years that had passed since I had left the service, I had not been invited to attend the annual reunions nor had I had any real contact with my old service. I therefore promptly accepted the kind invitation and looked foreward to the opportunity of meeting old friends.

On the day of the renuion, I arrived at the Air Force station at the appointed time and was met at the main gate by an officer who escorted me to a special enclosure at the parade ground. This enclosure was removed from the main enclosure for guests and I was about the only person there. The others were seated quite a distance away and I did not get to meet any of them. I was told by my escort officer that there had been a change in the programme and the 'get-together' of ex-servicemen was not being held now. He hoped, however, that I would attend the lunch which, he explained was now being held an hour earlier in the 'ladies' room of the officer's mess compound. He suggested that I should enter by the gate of the officer's mess, nearest to the 'ladies' room, and drive straight to the 'ladies' room where I would be received by the Chief of the Air Staff.

When I drove to the 'ladies' room of the officer's mess, I was met by the Chief of the Air Staff who promptly took me inside where there were half a dozen serving but no retired officers. I had hardly finished shaking hands with them when a waiter brought a tray of drinks. I took a glass and had taken only one sip when another waiter brought a tray of hot soup. He appeared to be waiting for me to finish my drink. Seeing others take a cup of soup each, I put my glass of orange juice down and also took a cup of soup.

Since the soup was hot I wanted to allow some time between the hot drink & the sip of cold orange juice that I had just had. I had hardly waited a minute when another waiter came and announced that lunch was served. Food had been laid out in buffet form on a table in the room where we were assembled and putting the cup of soup away I moved to the lunch table. We helped ourselves to the meal and since the conversation was rather limited the meal did not take long to finish. The lunch over, I found my hosts looking at each other as if to say "I wonder when he will want to leave." To save them further embarrassment, I said "I presume that you gentleman have a nap in the afternooon". Obviously relieved by my enquiry one of them replied. "As a matter of fact sir, we do". I therefore thanked my host, for his hospitality and took leave of them. When I left, I looked at my watch. I had been there exactly eleven minutes. This was my quickest meal.

I learnt later .that the ex-servicemen's get-together had been held as scheduled and retired officers had lunched with serving officers in the main rooms of the officer's mess after I had left. Politics of opposition in Pakistan turn a normal person into a social outcaste in government circles. Needless to say, I have not been invited to a re-union since.